

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-23. By the present response, the Applicants hereby amend claims 1, 9-11, and 14-20, and cancel claims 8, 13, and 23-40 to clarify certain features to expedite allowance of the present application. These amendments do not add any new matter. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Interview Summary

On August 28, 2006, the Applicants' representative, Tait R. Swanson (Reg. No. 48,226), initiated a telephonic interview with Examiner Hoang to discuss possible clarifications to expedite allowance of the present application. The Examiner suggested amending independent claims 1 and 11 to recite "a core-shell microstructure formed of particles in which each particle has a chromia-based core coated with a shell to reduce chromia loss due to chromia volatilization at high temperatures." In other words, the Examiner suggested clarifying that the core-shell microstructure relates to particles rather than the entire large-scale structure. The Applicants stress that this amendment does not narrow the scope of the independent claims, but rather clarifies the "microstructure" language in the claims. The Examiner also suggested amending independent claims 1 and 11 to recite the subject matter of dependent claims 8 and 13, respectively. Based on these amendments, the Examiner indicated that claims 1-7, 9-12, and 14-22 would be allowable over the prior art of record. The Examiner also agreed to enter these amendments without a request for continued examination (RCE). Finally, the Examiner suggested cancelling claims 23-40 to expedite allowance of claims 1-7, 9-12, and 14-22. The Applicants' representative agreed to these amendments based on the Examiner's indication that the application would be in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 23 was rejected under U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Suzuki et al. (DE 4021997 A1, hereinafter "Suzuki"). Claim 23 was further rejected under U.S.C. §102(b) as

being anticipated by Soda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,958,209, hereinafter "Soda"). In view of the cancellation of claim 23, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

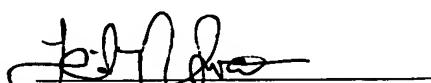
The Examiner rejected claims 1-9, 11-18, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ichikawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,058,787, hereinafter "Ichikawa") in view of Kuzuoka et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0020949, hereinafter "Kuzuoka"). The Examiner further rejected claims 10, 19-20, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ichikawa in view of Kuzuoka as applied to claims 1-9, 11-18 and 21-22 and further in view of Alles et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,297,438, hereinafter "Alles"). In view of the foregoing amendments and interview summary, the Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections.

Conclusion

In view of the remarks and amendments set forth above, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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